



Scotts and MLB Announce Grant Recipients for Youth Field Refurbishments

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Organizations From Allentown, Chicago, New York and Oklahoma
Chosen by Blue Ribbon Panel

Marysville, OH/New York, NY (May 1, 2019) - The Scotts Company LLC (Scotts) and Major League Baseball continue to refurbish youth baseball and softball fields around the country with four more communities scheduled to receive renovations in 2019. Scotts and MLB today announced the four community organizations that will receive improvements to their local ball fields through a grant initiative that is part of the Scotts(r) Field Refurbishment Program. The Scotts(r) Field Refurbishment Program provides youth with modern, playable baseball and softball fields in American communities of need.

The winners of the grant program are: Allentown School District and Lehigh Valley RBI Baseball (PA), City of Wewoka, Oklahoma (OK), Friends of Ray School PTO (Chicago, IL) and Friends of Mount Vernon Arts, Recreation and Youth Programs, Inc. (NY). More than \$200,000 in repairs and upgrades will be made across the four fields over the coming months.

MLB and Scotts received 350 grant applications across 300+ cities in 46 states seeking refurbishments for their youth fields. The winning organizations were chosen by a special blue-ribbon panel which included Baseball Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr., six-time MLB All-Star & 2008 World Series champion Chase Utley, Olympic Gold Medalist & MLB Youth Softball Ambassador Jennie Finch, World Series champion & MLB Network analyst Cliff Floyd, and additional executive leadership from MLB and Scotts.

"As a father, I know first-hand how vital it is to have a safe place for kids to play ball in their communities," said Utley. "I'm proud to partner with Scotts and support their Field Refurbishment Program, and provide the girls and boys in Allentown, Chicago, Mount Vernon and Wewoka spaces where they can learn the game while having fun. Baseball gave so much to me, and I hope that through this program, we can have a positive impact on the lives of children."

In addition to the grant, at each refurbished field Scotts will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony and youth baseball clinic run by the Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation that will be attended by special Major League guests. A new equipment package will also be provided to each of the four Scotts Field Refurbishment grant recipients.

ALLENTOWN, PA

The Allentown School District serves over 17,000 inner city children, making it the third-largest district in Pennsylvania, the fifth-most populated state in the country. Middle school, high school and RBI teams, among other youth leagues, all play baseball on the Allentown field, but many home games turn into road games due to poor field conditions. Once refurbished by Scotts, teams and leagues can return to a normal schedule and the community will look to increase the amount of events held on the field. That includes hosting youth tournaments, Jr. Home Run Derby competitions and MLB Pitch, Hit & Run competition. The Allentown School District and Lehigh Valley RBI also plan to schedule camps and clinics on the refurbished field to introduce baseball to youth in the area who have never or rarely played.

CHICAGO, IL

Ray Elementary School in Chicago is a public elementary school that serves over 700 diverse students from pre-K through eighth grade. Located in Hyde Park on the south side of Chicago, the school has suffered budget cuts over the past decade which have prevented any improvements to their baseball and softball field. Currently no community organizations are able to utilize this outdoor space, but with this Scotts Field Refurbishment grant, the renovated field will be able to support youth leagues, summer camps, after-school programs and physical education classes. After this field refurbishment, the Friends of Ray School PTO anticipate being able to expand youth engagement in softball and baseball to more than 1,200 boys & girls from Hyde Park, Woodlawn, Kenwood and neighboring South Side zip codes.

MOUNT VERNON, NY

Mount Vernon sits a dozen miles north of New York City with a diverse community including residents from over 40 countries. For decades the fields at Brush Park have been an iconic symbol of community, sportsmanship and youth sports enrichment in Mount Vernon and an epicenter of pluralistic relations and preparation for living in a diverse America. Here, the Mount Vernon RBI program is dedicated to teaching the fundamentals of baseball and softball to youth ages 5-17 years old. Access to outdoor green play-space in this four-square mile city is at a premium though. Limited field space has been a major obstacle to further expansion of the baseball/softball program, so this Scotts Field Refurbishment grant will allow thousands more children to play ball while also elevating the aesthetics of the community in a densely populated urban area.

WEWOKA, OK

Wewoka is one of the oldest, most historic communities in Oklahoma, but it faces a poverty rate that exceeds 55% in children under the age of 18. At Lion's Field in Wewoka, children from the rural community as young as four years old experience baseball for the first time. Nearly 10,000 kids in and around Wewoka look to this field for baseball and softball opportunities, but it has gone two decades without substantial investments. This Scotts Field Refurbishment immediately provides an enhanced, much-needed opportunity for more boys and girls to try the game, build friendships and develop life skills.

"We are proud to continue our field refurbishment program with MLB, as they share our commitment to giving back and impacting communities across the U.S.," said Josh Peoples, Senior Vice President, Brand Marketing, Scotts "These new fields will be bright spots in their respective neighborhoods where kids can just be kids. The upgrades we're making will ensure the area youth have a safe place to play the game they love, fueling their passion for sports and a healthy lifestyle."

MLB and Scotts, a long-time league sponsor, began the Scotts(r) Field Refurbishment Program prior to the 2016 championship season to provide kids with modern, playable ball fields in communities around the U.S. This program is part of Scotts' efforts as an official partner of the 'PLAY BALL' initiative, MLB's collective effort to encourage young people and communities to participate in baseball- or softball-related activities, including formal leagues, events and casual forms of play. In its first three seasons, the Scotts(r) Field Refurbishment Program renovated 20 fields with nearly \$2 million of support. At the conclusion of the 2019 season, those numbers will near two dozen fields and \$2.5M.

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